

GUNNISON MASTER PLAN UPDATE
DETAILED OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 2 – ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES

I. Natural Setting (rural mountain valley, open space, dark skies, etc.)

- ◆ The natural setting of Gunnison is an important part of quality of life.
 - The rural mountain valley with open vistas of surrounding hills and mountains
 - Dark skies with minimal light pollution

II. Natural Resources

A. Wildlife habitat

- ◆ Mule deer and elk winter concentration areas are located near Gunnison.
- ◆ Sage grouse severe winter range surrounds Gunnison
- ◆ Sage grouse brood areas and production areas surround Gunnison
- ◆ Reproduce Gunnison portion of County Comp Plan wildlife maps or reference count comp plan

B. Riparian areas and water recharge areas

- ◆ Riparian areas provide habitat for many species and serve as groundwater recharge areas for Gunnison's water supply.
- ◆ Much of the city and the three mile plan area is a groundwater recharge area.
- ◆ Show map (perhaps include with map of other constraints to development)

C. Water rights (reference to Infrastructure chapter)

- ◆ The city has established water rights and conditional water rights.
- ◆ A few highlights from the Infrastructure Chapter will be discussed, with reference to that chapter for more details.

D. Public lands

- ◆ Gunnison is nearly surrounded by public lands, including WSC, BLM to the east south and northwest.
- ◆ Curencanti/Blue Mesa is located about 10 miles west of Gunnison
- ◆ Bureau of Reclamation recently acquired about 7 miles (?) of riparian corridor along Tomichi Creek east of town
- ◆ Hartman Rocks, jointly owned by the city and county, provides a gateway to vast tracts of BLM land.
- ◆ Map of three mile plan area will show public lands w/in this area

III. Development Constraints/Land Suitability

A. High water table

- ◆ There is a high water table along much of the Gunnison River, Ohio Creek and Tomichi Creek corridors
- ◆ The high water table is similar in extent to the aquifer recharge area.

B. Geologic hazards/Slope constraints

- ◆ Much of the area within the three mile plan area is potentially unstable slope or unstable slope.
- ◆ Some private land, mostly west of town (Palisade/Antelope Hills) is steep enough to warrant prohibitions on development (30% slope) or some design standards/guidelines (15% - 30%).

C. Viewsheds

- ◆ Gunnison is surrounded by rugged mountain ranges in the background, a wide variety of rock types in the middleground and foreground (Palisade Cliffs, Hartman Rocks, hills in the middleground (W Mountain, Antelope Hills, BLM to the east and flat meadow/floodplains in all directions on the valley bottoms.
- ◆ The viewsheds from roads are an important part of community character for residents and tourists.
- ◆ Blowup and print the Gunnison portion of Figure I-4 of the county comp plan showing the Highway 50/135 viewsheds.

IV. Recycling and Energy Conservation

A. Waste recycling program

- ◆ Recyclables are taken to the County Recycling Center for transport
- ◆ The city operates a tree dump for tree limbs, grass, wood, barnyard waste, asphalt and concrete.

B. Energy conservation

- ◆ City of Gunnison and NMPP Energy will be offered free energy audits using an infrared camera for the City of Gunnison electric customers.
- ◆ City has adopted the International Energy Conservation Code

V. Desired future conditions, policies and action items

Desired Future Condition: The air remains clean, wildlife thrives, skies stay dark and rivers run clear. Area river systems remain a focus for conservation, protection, and recreation. Along with serving as the city's water source, the basin's alluvial aquifer sustains aquatic and wetland habitats unique to the area. The city's ground water source is of high quality and quantity, capable of serving existing and future needs while sustaining the valley's wetland and aquatic habitats.

POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS

Policy 1 – The City of Gunnison encourages “green” building practices. Action items to implement this policy include:

1. Study and implement tools that will encourage “green” building practices, including improved energy efficiency, active and passive solar, geothermal heat pump systems, and other techniques.
2. Educate the public (i.e., disseminate information/handouts, outreach efforts to contractors' associations) regarding grants, credits and other funding mechanisms for citizens and the City for green building practices.
3. Work with Gunnison County Electric Association to establish an education strategy.

Policy 2 – The City of Gunnison encourages recycling of waste. Action items to implement this policy include:

1. Work with the county to increase opportunities and capacity for recycling and composting organic waste.
2. Increase the number of waste recycling drop off locations in the City.
3. Educate the public on the high cost of trash disposal by offering incentives to reduce waste per household.

4. Educate contractors on how to utilize existing recycling and trash facilities to reduce the likelihood of job site pollution.

Policy 3 – The City of Gunnison encourages the preservation and enhancement of dark skies. Action items to implement this policy include:

1. Amend the Land Development Code accordingly for exterior lighting standards to consider (1) nuisance factors, (2) safety factors, and (3) preservation of dark skies.
2. Monitor backscatter from night skies to understand trends in the Gunnison Valley.

Policy 3 – The City of Gunnison is committed to protecting water resources, the city's water rights, wildlife habitat, air quality and visual resources. Action items to implement this policy include:

1. Establish a monitoring system for predicting threats to the city's water quality, particularly on the former Van Tuyl Ranch property now owned by the city.
2. Create a setback buffer around city well heads that will restrict development.
3. Work with private and public entities to:
 - a. Preserve the quality and quantity of wetlands within the region, especially those areas which affect the city's water resources.
 - b. Maintain surface and ground water quality to ensure healthy drinking water supplies; recreation opportunities; and viable habitat conditions for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.
 - c. Conserve wildlife/fisheries habitat and support efforts to enhance it.
 - d. Ensure high air quality standards.
4. Develop water rights, including conditional water rights, as needed for future uses.
5. Continue the city's active role in the opposition to transmountain water diversion.
6. Work with the County of Gunnison and Gunnison Valley Sage Grouse Committee to establish policies for sage grouse preservation.
7. Identify and analyze critical view sheds within the three-mile boundary
8. Work with the County to address view shed preservation in an IGA.

Policy 4 – The City of Gunnison is committed to minimizing noise pollution within and near the city. An action item to implement this policy includes:

1. Work with the county to prohibit the use of jake brakes in and near the City, particularly at the west entrance to the City.

Note: Insert Policy 13 in Chapter 11 and Policy 16 in Chapter 3.

13. Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that emphasizes natural resource preservation, including the utilization of the VanTuyl property.

16. Work with the County to establish a policy in an IGA for height restriction guidelines.